



Updating Newtown's Plan of Conservation and Development -2002-



Plan Memorandum # 8



Housing



**Prepared for the
Newtown Planning and Zoning Commission**



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I. INTRODUCTION

The type, condition, layout and cost of housing in a community are important factors to the quality of life within a community. This element of Newtown's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) examines the status of Newtown's current housing stock to understand what future housing needs exist and to suggest actions designed to address those needs over the next ten years.

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes establish the requirements for the housing portion of a POCD as follows: "Such plan shall make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multi-family dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity, for all residents and the planning region in which the municipality is located.... Such plan shall also promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate-income households...."

II. EXISTING HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The 2000 Census recorded 8,601 housing units in Newtown. Of these, 96.8% were occupied. The resulting vacancy rate of 3.2% is very low. Owner occupied housing units comprised 91.9% of Newtown's total housing units and renter occupied units comprised the 8.1% balance in 2000. The 2000 Census counted 276 vacant housing units in Newtown, of which 37% were classified as seasonal, recreational or for occasional use.

Table 1
Housing Occupancy Characteristics in 2000
Newtown, Connecticut

	Number of Housing Units	% of Housing Units
Total Housing Units	8,601	
Occupied Housing Units	8,325	96.8
Vacant Housing Units	276	3.2
Occupied Housing Units	8,325	
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	7,654	91.9
Renter-Occupied Housing Units	671	8.1
Vacant Housing Units	276	
For Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use	102	37.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

A. Occupancy and Vacancy Characteristics:

Table 2 describes the occupancy characteristics of Newtown's housing stock compared to its neighboring communities, the Housatonic Valley Region and the State of Connecticut in 2000. Newtown's vacancy rate of 3.2% was lower than that of the Housatonic Valley Region, at 5.1% and the State, at 6.1%. In comparison to surrounding communities, Newtown's vacancy rate of 3.2% is lower than Bridgewater's 9.8%, Brookfield's 3.6%, Redding's 5.4% and Southbury's 7.4%. Newtown's vacancy rate is higher than Bethel's 2.2%, Easton's 1.8%, Monroe's 1.8% and Oxford's 2.3%. As described in Table 2, all of the communities surrounding Newtown, with the exception of Bethel, have little in the way of rental housing, as recorded by the 2000 Census.

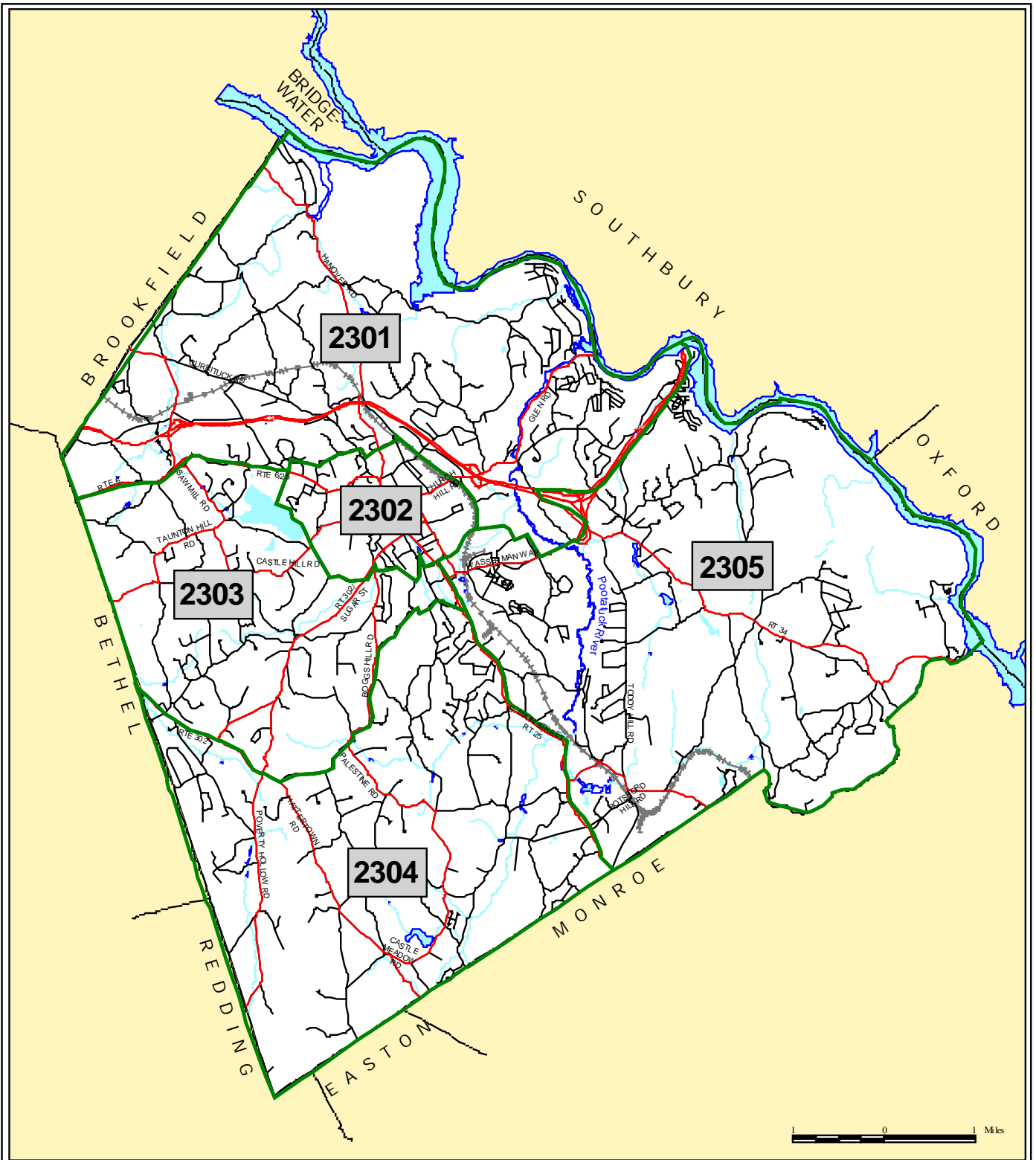


Table 2
Housing Inventory Characteristics in 2000
Newtown, Adjacent Communities, the Region and the State

	Total Housing Units	% Occupied	% Vacant		Total Occupied Units	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied
NEWTOWN	8,601	96.8%	3.2%		8,325	91.9%	8.1%
Bethel	6,653	97.8%	2.2%		6,505	76.6%	23.4%
Bridgewater	779	90.2%	9.8%		703	90.0%	10.0%
Brookfield	5,781	96.4%	3.6%		5,572	89.0%	11.0%
Easton	2,511	98.2%	1.8%		2,465	94.3%	5.7%
Monroe	6,601	98.2%	1.8%		6,481	93.4%	6.6%
Oxford	3,420	97.7%	2.3%		3,343	91.0%	9.0%
Redding	8,287	94.6%	5.4%		2,918	90.1%	9.9%
Southbury	7,799	92.6%	7.4%		7,225	89.5%	10.5%
Housatonic Valley Region	79,760	94.9%	5.1%		75,729	75.7%	24.3%
Connecticut	1,385,975	93.9%	6.1%		1,301,670	66.8%	33.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials

Housing unit vacancy characteristics for each of the Town's census tracts are presented in Table 3. The Town's average housing vacancy rate according to the 2000 Census was 3.2%. None of the Town's Census Tracts had vacancy rates notably higher than the townwide average. Table 4 describes the ownership characteristics of Newtown by Census Tract. Each of Newtown's census tracts show consistently high



SOURCE OF BASE MAP:
Geo-satellite
United States Census Bureau, 2000

Legend

Census Tracts

2000 Census Tracts

Plan of Conservation & Development

Newtown, Connecticut



HARRALL-MICHALOWSKI
ASSOCIATES, Incorporated

Hamden, Connecticut

January 2002

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homeownership characteristics, each being 90% or greater. The accompanying map depicts the location of census tracts within Newtown.

Table 3
Housing Occupancy Characteristics
by Census Tract in 2000
Newtown, Connecticut

	Total Housing Units	# Occupied Housing Units	% Occupied Housing Units	# Vacant Housing Units	% Vacant Housing Units
NEWTOWN	8,601	8,325	96.8	276	3.2
Tract 2301	2,181	2,102	96.4	79	3.6
Tract 2302	668	649	97.2	19	2.8
Tract 2303	1,206	1,170	97.0	36	3.0
Tract 2304	1,851	1,810	97.8	41	2.2
Tract 2305	2,695	2,594	96.3	101	3.7

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table 4
Tenure of Occupied Housing Units
by Census Tract in 2000
Newtown, Connecticut

	# Occupied Housing Units	# Owner- Occupied Housing Units	% Owner- Occupied Housing Units	# Renter- Occupied Housing Units	% Renter- Occupied Housing Units
NEWTOWN	8,325	7,654	91.9	671	8.1
Tract 2301	2,102	1,934	92.0	168	8.0
Tract 2302	649	587	90.4	62	9.6
Tract 2303	1,170	1,101	94.1	69	5.9
Tract 2304	1,810	1,683	93.0	127	7.0
Tract 2305*	2,594	2,349	90.6	245	9.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

B. Housing Inventory Characteristics

During the 1990's, the Town gained 1,407 housing units, a 19.6% increase. All of Newtown's Census Tracts, with the exception of Tract 2302 (the Borough) gained housing units during the 1990's. The Borough tract lost 6 housing units between 1990 and 2000.

Table 5
Change in Housing Inventory
by Census Tract: 1990 to 2000
Newtown, Connecticut

Census Tract	Housing Units 1990 Census	Housing Units 2000 Census	Numerical Change 1990 - 2000	% Change 1990 - 2000
NEWTOWN	7,194	8,601	1,407	19.6
Tract 2301	1,678	2,181	503	30.0
Tract 2302	674	668	-6	-0.9
Tract 2303	1,121	1,206	85	7.6
Tract 2304	1,485	1,851	366	24.6
Tract 2305*	2,137	2,695	459	20.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

* Note: Note Census Tract 2306, which existed for the 1990 Census has been eliminated by the Census Bureau. In 2000 Census, Census Tract 2305 has been redefined to include the former Tract 2306. To facilitate comparison, 1990 Census Data for Tracts 1305 and 2306 have been combined.

Newtown's housing stock, as described by the 2000 Census, consists of 92.8% single family detached housing; 2.2% single family attached housing; 3.9% multi-family housing (2 units or more); and 1.2% mobile home or other.



Table 6
Change in Housing Inventory
by Structure Type: 1990 to 2000
Newtown, Connecticut

	Housing Units 1990	% of Housing Stock	Housing Units 2000	% of Housing Stock	Change in Units 1990-2000	% Change Between 1990-2000
TYPE OF STRUCTURE						
1 unit, detached	6,628	92.1	7,979	92.8	1,351	20.4
1 unit, attached	69	1.0	189	2.2	120	173.9
2 to 4 units	274	3.8	270	3.1	(4)	(1.5)
5 to 9 units	7	0.1	49	0.6	42	600
10 or more units	16	0.2	13	0.1	(3)	(18.8)
Mobile home, trailer, other	200	2.8	101	1.2	(99)	(49.5)
TOTALS	7,194	100.0	8,601	100.0	1,407	19.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table 6 illustrates changes that have occurred in the Town's housing stock between 1990 and 2000. According to the Census, 1,513 new housing units were added to Newtown's housing stock between 1990 and 2000. Of these, 89.3% (1,351) were single family detached homes, 7.9% (120) were single family attached homes and 2.8% (42) were located in buildings containing 5 to 9 units of housing. In addition to the new housing units added, Newtown lost 99 housing units for a net gain of 1,407 housing units between 1990 and 2000.

As described in Table 7, the characteristics of housing types found in Newtown are similar in composition to several adjacent communities, including Bridgewater, Easton, Oxford and Redding. The housing stock characteristics of the adjacent towns of Bethel and Southbury are quite dissimilar from Newtown's, with high proportions of housing categorized as single family attached, indicating the presence of condominium type housing.



Table 7
Housing Units by Structure Type in 2000
Newtown, Adjacent Communities and Connecticut

	Single Family Detached	% Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached & 2 to 4 Units	% Single Family Attached & 2 to 4 Units	Multi- Family (5 or More Units)	% Multi- Family (5 or More Units & Other)	Total Housing Units
NEWTOWN	7,979	92.8	459	5.3	163	1.9	8,601
Bethel	4435	66.7	1,635	24.6	583	8.8	6,653
Bridgewater	731	93.8	37	4.7	11	1.4	779
Brookfield	4,718	81.6	654	11.3	409	7.1	5,781
Easton	2,483	98.9	21	.08	7	0.3	2,511
Monroe	5,736	86.9	625	9.5	240	3.6	6,601
Oxford	3,169	92.7	199	5.8	52	1.5	3,420
Redding	2,945	95.4	115	3.7	26	0.8	3,086
Southbury	4,343	55.7	3,005	38.5	451	5.8	7,799
Danbury	12,653	44.4%	9,008	31.6%	6,858	24.0	28,519
Connecticut	816,706	58.9	317,802	22.9	251,467	18.2	1,385,975

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; % may not add due to rounding

C. Housing Growth and Age

To quantify the housing unit growth that occurred in the Town from 1990 through 2000, statistics from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development were used to determine housing construction authorizations by structure type, by year. These statistics are presented in Table 8 and describe housing development trends during that 11 year period. During that time frame, Newtown consistently ranked as a top producer of housing. In fact, from 1992 through 1997, Newtown ranked between 2nd and 7th of Connecticut's 169 cities and towns in housing unit development. During this period of growth, 98.1% of Newtown's new housing development was in the form of single family detached housing

Table 8
Housing Construction Activity Authorized: 1990 to 2000
Newtown, Connecticut

Year	Total Housing Units Authorized	1 Unit Detached	1 Unit Attached	2 Units	3 & 4 Units	5 Units or More	Rank in State by Net Gain
1990	69	69	0	0	0	0	33 rd
1991	92	92	0	0	0	0	18 th
1992	143	143	0	0	0	0	7 th
1993	207	207	0	0	0	0	5 th
1994	213	213	0	0	0	0	4 th
1995	210	193	17	0	0	0	2 nd
1996	199	181	18	0	0	0	2 nd
1997	195	*195	-*	0	0	0	4 th
1998	238	*238	-*	0	0	0	6 th
1999	221	*221	-*	0	0	0	7 th
2000	103	103	0	0	0	0	21 st
Totals	1,890	1,855	35	0	0	0	

Source: State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, "Connecticut Housing Production and Permit Authorized Construction Report".

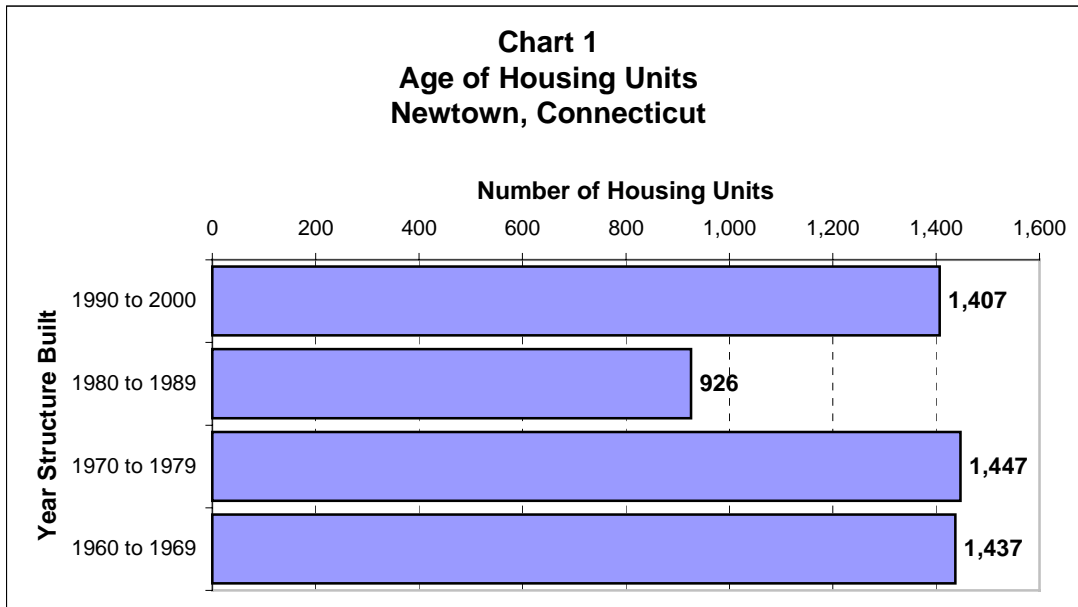
Note: NR – data Not Reported

* - single-family attached units are no longer a category for reporting

** - total figures do not include numbers for 1996

A potential indicator of housing condition in a community is the age of the housing stock. Sixty-one per cent of Newtown's housing stock was constructed between 1960 and 2000. As shown in the chart below, with the exception of the 1980's decade, Newtown has experienced a very constant rate of housing productivity of between 1,407 and 1,447 dwelling units per decade. Housing developed between 1980 and 2000 accounts for 27.1 % of Newtown's housing stock, while 33.5 % of the Town's housing was developed between 1960 and 1980. Even though the number of housing units developed during the past 20 years is less than the previous 20 years, the public

perception that the rate of housing development within the community has increased during the past two decades is probably due to the “large lot” nature of development, which has resulted in an acceleration in the amount of land consumed by development.



D. Affordability of Housing

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that a municipality “shall consider” the need for affordable housing in the preparation of a plan of conservation and development. Housing affordability is a many faceted issue. Some aspects of housing affordability are beyond the control of a local municipality, while others are directly affected by a municipalities land use policies and regulatory practices.

The demand for housing will “drive” the housing market and housing demand, within the setting of a regional housing market is largely beyond the control of an individual municipality. The quantity and characteristics of the demand for housing flow from a market



Riverview Condominiums

area’s economic conditions, as they affect income levels, job growth and job security. The regional economy within which Newtown is located is continuing to become more globally connected and less responsive to the control of local municipalities.

Housing costs are largely the result of the following factors: the demand for housing relative to the available supply; the location (time/distance) of housing relative to the sources of demand; the availability and cost of buildable land for the spectrum of market desired housing choices; labor and material costs; the age, quality and supply of existing housing inventory within the competitive housing market area; the development of new housing product as it affects available inventory; and housing carrying costs, including mortgage interest rates, utilities and taxes.

Public and Non-Profit Efforts- In their efforts to increase the production of housing that is affordable to the broad spectrum of society, local, state and federal government and non-profit organizations have created a variety of housing programs to reduce housing costs. One common characteristic among many of these programs is that they employ a form of financial subsidy to defray the cost of the units being produced, renovated, or occupied. While these programs serve to provide immediate solutions to the need for affordable housing, they do not address underlying economic factors that affect housing costs and therefore have only a limited effect on overall housing market conditions and affordability.

According to recent real estate market statistics, homes sales in Newtown during the past six years averaged 568 units per year. Statistics for the first half of 2002 indicate that current year sales will be in the range of 400 –500 units. As shown in Table 9, median sales prices for single family detached homes and condominiums in Newtown have increased annually since 1996.

Table 9
Number of Sales & Median Sales Price
Single Family Detached and Condominium Housing
1996 to 2002

NEWTOWN	Single Family		Condominium	
	Number of Sales	Median Sales Price	Number of Sales	Median Sales Price
2002 (Jan - June)	233	349,900	21	258,000
2001	444	315,000	30	237,000
2000	535	312,500	18	204,900
1999	645	260,000	55	189,900
1998	667	251,000	29	205,000
1997	530	374,700	23	180,000
1996	590	226,000	28	163,000

Source: The Warren Group

Table 10
Comparison of Median Sales Prices of Single family Homes: 1996-2002
Newtown and Adjacent Communities

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002 (Jan-Apr)
NEWTOWN*	226,000	234,700	251,000	260,000	312,500	315,000	349,900
Bethel	175,000	172,000	190,000	198,000	225,900	239,900	256,000
Bridgewater	195,000	207,500	225,000	242,000	347,000	315,000	423,750
Brookfield	201,000	210,000	231,000	247,750	269,200	308,750	274,900
Easton	342,500	345,000	414,750	450,000	484,500	540,000	478,000
Monroe	233,700	232,000	263,000	264,464	289,950	324,675	339,900
Oxford	171,500	175,000	185,000	199,000	232,500	235,950	237,950
Redding	332,500	350,000	370,000	406,250	440,000	498,000	504,000
Southbury	220,750	221,000	238,500	235,000	255,000	280,000	240,000

Source: The Warren Group; * Newtown 2002 statistics cover January through June

Affordable Housing Appeals Law: The State of Connecticut has established an Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (AHAP) to provide developers with assistance building housing that contains a minimum percent of affordable housing. The AHAP does not apply where at least 10% of the dwelling units in the municipality are either:

- (i) governmentally assisted housing,
- (ii) currently financed by Connecticut Housing Finance Authority or Farmer's Home Administration mortgages, or
- (iii) subject to deeds containing covenants or restrictions that require sale or rental at affordable levels.

Under the AHAP law, "affordable levels" mean housing for which persons and families pay 30% or less of adjusted gross income, where such income is less than or equal to 80% of the areas median family income.

Where municipalities do not reach the 10% level required for exclusion from the AHAP, developers of proposed projects containing a defined percentage of government assisted housing or affordable housing set-aside, may appeal denial of municipal zoning approvals to the court. Assisted housing developments are those that receive financial assistance from government program for construction or rehabilitation of low or moderate-income housing or "Section 8" supported housing. Affordable housing "set-aside" projects must reserve 30% of the total units proposed to be developed for affordable housing. One half of those set-aside units must be rented to persons or families whose income is less than or equal to 80% of the lesser of the state or area median income; the remaining half of the set-aside units must be reserved at 60% of the lesser of the state or area median income. Current median family income levels for the Newtown area are \$98,100.

The most recent data from the Affordable Housing Appeals Program, as administered by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development puts the number of affordable housing units in Newtown in 2001 at 275. That constitutes 3.2% of the estimated number of housing units in the Town. This level does not exempt the Town from the over-ride provisions of the AHAP. Affordable housing in Newtown, as defined by these State regulations, is currently distributed as follows:

Number of Governmentally Assisted Units:	233 units
Number of CHFA/FmHA Mortgages	27 units
Deed Restricted	<u>15 units</u>
Total	275 units

E. Multi-Family & Elderly Housing

Multi-Family Housing: Historically, residential development in Newtown has taken the form of single family detached, owner occupied housing. Like most suburban communities in the Housatonic Valley Region, Newtown lacks a significant supply of varying housing choices at various price points. This is especially true of multi-family housing (332 units out of 8,601 total units- 3.9%) and rental housing (671 renter occupied units out of 8,325 occupied units- 8.1%). Table 12 identifies the location, type and size of multi-family and condominium housing developments within Newtown.

Regional Perspective: Housing needs extend well beyond municipal boundaries and the development of multi-family housing in significant quantities is best provided where infrastructure resources permit. From a regional planning perspective, the Town of Newtown is located in the Housatonic Valley Planning Region, where the City of Danbury functions to provide much of the multi-family housing inventory in the Region. In 2000, Danbury's housing inventory included 9,830 units of multi-family housing and 2,137 units of 1 unit attached housing.

Although not adjacent to Newtown, the City of Danbury is located approximately five to ten minutes west of Newtown and is the core city of the Housatonic Valley Region. The City of Danbury has historically pursued land development practices, by its actions to zone significant amounts of land for multi-family housing and to serve that land with essential public utilities, to successfully encourage the development of a variety of multi-family housing types in significant quantities. Danbury was Connecticut's fastest growing City or Town (in terms of population added) during the 1990's decade and continues to maintain that position today.

Multi-Family and Condominium Housing in Newtown: Multi-family affordable housing development (AHD) is permitted in Newtown, subject to the granting of a special exception, in Farming, R-1/2, R-1, R-2 and R-3 zones. The Riverview project, located on Bryan Lane behind Sand Hill Plaza, is a 49 unit condominium project developed under the AHD provisions, containing 13 units of "set-aside" affordable housing. Multi-family affordable housing is also permitted by special

exception in the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse zone. Multi-family elderly housing (62 years of age or older, or 55 if the project meets defined requirements of the U.S Code and Code of Federal Regulations) is permitted in the EH-10 zone, subject to the granting of a special exception. A maximum of 24 units of multi-family housing, associated with commercial uses, is permitted in the Hawleyville



Riverview Condominiums- "AHD"

Center Design District-East (HCDD-E), subject to the granting of a special exception permit. The Sandy Hook Design District (SHDD) permits the development of up to three dwellings per lot when associated with commercial uses, subject to obtaining site development plan approval or a special exception permit. The special exception process plays an important role in that it allows the Town to maintain control over the siting of multi-family housing, which helps ensure that a proposed project will work well within the context of surrounding land uses. Accessory apartments are also permitted in owner occupied dwellings located in R-1 and larger residential zoning districts throughout the Town.

Elderly Housing: Housing for the elderly is a critical concern for most communities. As the population of a town ages, it is important that a community provide alternative living arrangements, from single-family detached homes to multi-unit communities, as options for seniors. This gives the elderly population opportunities to continue to reside within the community where they have



spent the majority of their years and not be forced-out by escalating housing costs. Housing product for the elderly spans a broad range of types and supporting services. From housing designed to promote mobility e.g., one-level, grab bars, ramps, etc., to provision of medical and support of daily living functions, there are many variations of elderly housing product. The main distinguishing characteristics of the housing types are the level of medical assistance and the extent of communal facilities provided. Various types of elderly housing facilities are described as follows:

Assisted Living Facility: Assisted Living facilities are managed residential communities that provide supportive services to residents. In an Assisted Living development, residents typically live in an apartment style unit and pay monthly fees for services. By Connecticut Statutes, Assisted Living Communities must provide core supportive services that include laundry; transportation and housekeeping services; meals; recreational activities and maintenance. Chore services for routine domestic tasks, assistance with daily activities, nursing services and medication supervision are to be provided as needed. A resident services



The Homesteads at Newtown- Assisted Living



Ashlar Lockwood Lodge- Assisted Living

coordinator is required as well as emergency call services in each unit, 24 hour security and on-call nursing services 24 hours a day. Skilled nursing and medical services are not generally provided. This type of housing facility is intended to assist residents with activities of daily living while maintaining a maximum level of independence.

Congregate Living Facilities: Provide residents with private living arrangements, moderate supportive services and common areas for dining, socialization and other activities. These communities furnish at least one daily meal, which is usually included in the monthly fee, housekeeping services and a variety of social and recreational activities. Congregate housing is meant for individuals who are basically self-sufficient but need a few services to help them to live independently. Congregate housing does not generally offer in-unit assistance of health care services.

Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC): CCRC's are sometimes referred to as life-care communities. These communities are designed and operated to assure residents, through contractual agreements, lifetime living accommodations and a variety of services including long-term health and nursing services. Each resident must enter into a residency agreement that requires the payment of an entrance fee and monthly fees. CCRC's offer

various types of care that allow residents to remain at the development and move from one level of care to another as their needs change.

Government Assisted Independent Living Facility: These include rental housing complexes with age and income restrictions, such as Nunnawauk Meadows, that have received some form of government assistance. This housing type provides independent living opportunities for senior citizens and younger persons with disabilities. These facilities are meant for individuals whose physical mobility and health enable them to live independently with minimal or no assistance. Some independent living complexes include community rooms and common dining rooms for tenant use. Larger complexes may employ resident service coordinators to help residents access community-based services including transportation; senior service programming; social and recreational activities; and health and nutrition programs.



Nunnawauk Meadows

Nursing Homes: Can be either chronic or convalescent facilities or rest homes with nursing supervision. Nursing Homes provide residents with nursing care; meals; recreational and social activities; help with daily living tasks; and protective supervision. Residents usually have physical or mental impairments that keep them from living independently. Nursing homes employ medical and nursing staff to provide health care to residents.



Ashlar of Newtown- Frail Elderly Nursing Home

Residential Care Homes: Designed to accommodate residents who are no longer suited for independent living but who do not require the extensive medical care offered in nursing home, rest home or convalescent environments. Residents of Residential Care Homes may require some

assistance with daily activities, special diets and/or supervision of medications. Residential Care Homes generally provide a communal living environment. Connecticut State law requires that Residential Care Homes provide three meals a day, housekeeping and laundry services, recreational activities, 24 hour a day supervision and a mechanism in place for residents to obtain help in emergencies. Residential Care Homes are not licensed to provide nursing services. Staff can supervise residents to ensure they remember to take their prescribed medications and may help them schedule medical appointments.

Retirement Community – Retirement communities are age restricted but the age requirement may vary from town to town. In Newtown the age restriction for the EH-10 zone, which allows the development of age restricted housing, is 62 years of age or older. If the age restricted project meets certain defined requirements of the U.S Code and Code of Federal Regulations, the age restriction may be reduced to 55 years of age or older. Retirement communities are designed for individuals in reasonably good health who can live independently. Communities may be rental or condominium. Units can be single-family homes, townhouses or apartments. Retirement communities vary in the type of services and amenities they provide. Some may include extensive recreational and leisure activities to attract a particular segment of the market.

Nunnawauk Meadows: The Town of Newtown, in association with the non-profit organization Newtown Housing for the Elderly, Inc., has facilitated the development of the Nunnawauk Meadows housing for the elderly complex. Located on Nunnawauk Road, this 120 unit development provides income restricted, independent living for seniors and those with disabilities. The current waiting list contains approximately 175 applicants, which according to management, equates to a two to three year waiting period for unit availability. Nunnawauk Meadows has filed an application with the Town to develop 24 additional units of senior housing.



Nunnawauk Meadows

The past decade in Newtown saw the development of assisted living facilities and age restricted condominium housing, as well as the expansion of skilled nursing home resources for the frail elderly. These housing resources are described in the following table.

Table 11
Age Restricted, Assisted Living, Elderly,
Affordable and Frail Elderly Housing Resources*
Newtown, Connecticut

Complex Name/Location	Number of Units	Type of Housing
Nunnawauk Meadows Newtown Housing for the Elderly Inc.	120 Units 14 Units	Government Assisted Independent Living
Ashlar of Newtown 139 Toddy Hill Road	156 Beds	Skilled Nursing Home
Lockwood Lodge at Ashlar 139 Toddy Hill Road	56 Units	Assisted Living
The Homesteads at Newtown 166 Mount Pleasant Road (Rte 6)	100 Units 46 Units 134 Units	Assisted Living Age Restricted Condominiums Age Restricted Congregate
Walnut Tree Village Walnut Tree Hill Road	132 Units	Age Restricted Condominiums
Liberty at Newtown** Mount Pleasant Road (Rte 6)	92 Units	Age Restricted Condominiums

Source: Newtown Land Use Office;

*Numbers above are for approved housing. The 14 units for independent living at Nunnawauk Village have not been constructed; only 11 condominium units at The Homesteads have been constructed and they remain vacant pending resolution of tax issues; none of the 132 approved congregate living units at The Homesteads have been constructed; approximately 100 condominium units at Walnut Tree Village have been constructed and occupied, with the balance are currently under construction; and, the recently approved 92 condominium units at The Liberty are scheduled for occupancy beginning in 2003.

III. NEWTOWN'S FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Plan Memorandum #4 of Newtown's POCD update process assessed the future development potential of the Town. Potential growth was expressed in terms of potential dwelling units from vacant land areas zoned for residential use. For the purposes of this analysis, agricultural land uses that are not deed restricted to remain as open land are also included as potentially developable land.

Methodology: Based on an inventory of existing land use, approximately 12,175 acres of vacant land and un-protected agricultural land were identified as potentially available to support residential development. The underlying assumption to estimate future residential development potential is that current land use permitting practices for residential development will be continued in the future. The rate of land consumed per lot approved during the past 10 years, 4.5 acres per unit, is due to the physical / environmental constraints of the landscape, road infrastructure requirements and the Town's minimum lot area requirements. The trend in land consumption per lot is expected to continue and may increase as traditional large lot subdivisions continue to be developed and developable land void of environmental constraints continues to diminish. It is reasonable to expect that the patterns of large lot residential developments will continue into the next decade.

Residential Development Potential Estimates: Based on these assumptions, it is estimated that the maximum build-out of the remaining 12,175 acres of residentially zoned vacant and agricultural land could accommodate a net total of 2,705 additional dwelling units (12,175 acres/4.5 acres lot = 2,705 lots). The estimate of 2,705 potential new dwelling units at full build-out, in addition to the existing housing supply of 8,601 housing units, would bring Newtown's total housing inventory at build-out to 11,305 units, representing a 24% increase over 2000 levels.

Residential Development Caveats: It is important to note several additional factors that could affect future residential development potential. These factors include: 1. the State Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure described above, which has the power to override local zoning and enable the construction of housing at densities well above Newtown's current standards; 2. the Affordable Housing Development provisions of the Town's zoning regulations which permit the development of housing at a density of 4 units per "usable" acre; and 3. the Elderly Housing-10 zone of Newtown's zoning regulations which allow the development of elderly housing at the density of 3.5 times the lot acreage or a maximum of 150 units, whichever is less, as well as congregate housing at a density of 6 times the lot acreage or a maximum of 300 units, whichever is less.

An additional housing consideration is the re-use of the former Fairfield Hills Hospital Campus. Multi-family affordable housing is currently permitted by special exception in the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse zone. The Town is in the process of planning for the re-use of this 180 acre area. Prior to the closing of this facility, the campus has 29 units of detached and duplex housing. To date, Town

discussions on the future re-use of the Fairfield Hills Campus do not indicate the development of a major residential component.

During the past 10 years, these Town zoning provisions have been used to enable the development of 192 units of multi-family and single family attached housing. In addition, the Homesteads of Newtown was permitted for 160 congregate housing units and 27 age restricted condominium units which have yet to be constructed. One hundred units of assisted living housing were developed at the Homesteads at Newtown. Ashlar of Newtown expanded its skilled nursing home facility and added 56 units of assisted housing. Assisted living housing and nursing home facilities are not counted by the Census as individual housing units but are instead categorized as residents living in group quarters.



Walnut Tree Village- “EH-10”

IV. POPULATION AND HOUSING TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

Trends: The following table summarizes the housing trends in Newtown for the past 30 years in terms of the type of dwelling units constructed. The predominate housing trend in Newtown for the past 30 years has been the construction of owner occupied, single family detached housing. During the 1990's, 93% of the housing units constructed in Newtown were single family detached houses.

Table 12
Housing By Number of Units in Structure
Newtown, Connecticut

Number of Dwelling Units Per Structure	1970	1980	1990	2000
1 DU/Structure	4,241	5,547	6,697	8,168
2-9 DU's/ Structure	239	355	281	319
10 or More DU	10	12	16	13
Other	120	118	200	101
Totals	4,610	6,032	7,194	8,601

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; HVCEO; as compiled by HMA

Table 14 summarizes the changes in the population characteristics of the Town during the same period 30 year period. The population of Newtown has continued to age, with the median age increasing from 31.4 years in 1970 to 37.5 years in 2000, which is nearly identical to the median age of the population of Connecticut in 2000 (37.4). The number of Newtown residents between the ages of 5 and 19 increased by 547 from 1970 to 2000 and the number of residents over the age of 65 increased by 437 during the same period. These increases, however, have not been gradual nor continual.

Implications: In planning for the next 10 years and beyond, existing municipal regulations relating to housing indicate that past housing trends will continue in Newtown's future. The implications of these trends include:

- If economic conditions during the next 10 years approximate those of the past 10 years, Newtown can expect the development of approximately 1,400 new housing units. Approximately 90% of these units will be owner occupied single family detached homes and the balance will be age restricted housing and housing developed under Town or State affordable housing provisions.
- Average household size in Newtown is not likely to experience any significant change.
- The current ratio of owner occupied to renter occupied housing is likely to continue.

- Newtown will continue to lack the production of new rental housing which would make it possible for smaller households, single person households, family households, households with moderate incomes and residents with changing housing needs to live in Newtown.

Table 13
Summary of Population Changes 1970-2000
Newtown, Connecticut

	1970	1970	1980	1980	Change 1970- 1980	1990	1990	Change 1980- 1990	2000	2000	Change 1990- 2000
Age Group	#	%	#	%		#	%		#	%	
Under 5	1,465	8.65	1,193	6.24	-272	1,484	7.14	291	2,022	8.08	538
5 to 9	1,894	11.18	1,499	7.85	-395	1,512	7.28	13	2,151	8.59	639
10 to 14	1,700	10.03	1,991	10.42	291	1,433	6.90	-558	2,104	8.41	671
15 to 19	1,185	6.99	1,836	9.61	651	1,478	7.11	-358	1,442	5.76	-36
20 to 24	780	4.60	1,114	5.83	334	1,079	5.19	-35	714	2.85	-365
25 to 34	2,286	13.49	2,989	15.64	703	3,057	14.71	68	2,772	11.07	-285
35 to 44	2,251	13.29	3,202	16.76	951	4,089	19.68	887	5,355	21.39	1,266
45 to 54	1,947	11.49	2,201	11.52	254	3,018	14.52	817	4,004	16.00	986
55 to 59	880	5.19	819	4.29	-61	990	4.76	171	1,389	5.55	399
60 to 64	772	4.56	701	3.67	-71	750	3.61	49	889	3.55	139
65 to 74	1,095	6.46	884	4.63	-211	1,070	5.15	186	1,212	4.84	142
75 & Over	687	4.06	678	3.55	-9	819	3.94	141	977	3.90	158
Totals	16,942	100	19,107	100	2,165	20,779	100	1,672	25,031	100	4,252
5 to 19	4,779		5,326		547	4,423		-903	5,697		1,274
65 & Over	1,752		1,562		-190	1,889		327	2,189		300
Persons Per Household	3.47		3.32			2.94			2.9		
Median Age	31.4		31.9			35.9			37.5		

Source: Census; Newtown Community Development; as compiled by HMA.

- New housing growth will not provide a variety of housing choice and therefore can not be used as an inducement to promote desired economic development.

- Natural resource conservation and the preservation of the Town's remaining open space will gain even greater attention as a major community character issue, as the remaining areas of vacant land are considered for residential development.
- New residential growth will add to the Town's tax base. However, the projected character of growth, families living in single family detached homes, also brings with it population increases that require municipal services, especially public school services.
- Affordable elderly housing opportunities for Newtown residents of modest means who seek independent housing options appear inadequate to meet existing and future needs of the Town's senior population. Elderly housing developed by the private sector under the "EH-10" provisions have been relatively high-end condominium housing.

Conclusions: Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes that establish the requirement of the housing portion of a POCD as follows: "Such plan shall make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multi-family dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region in which the municipality is located.... Such plan shall also promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate-income households...."

Given the predominate owner occupied, single family detached character of Newtown's housing stock and the lack of varied housing opportunities in terms of type and quantity of units, size of units and housing cost, the Town is not well positioned to meet the housing needs of a diverse group of residents, now or in the future.

IV. HOUSING ISSUES, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

1993 Plan of Development

To have a better understanding of how housing issues in the Town have both changed and remained the same, the goals and policies of the previous plan of development were examined and are summarized as follows:

Goals: The two housing goals of Newtown's 1993 POD were: 1. encourage housing forms that would protect meaningful open space, minimize impacts on the environment and protect the character of Newtown and, 2. provide for a range of housing opportunities that would supply the local and regional market in terms of affordability and housing type.

To meet these goals, the plan recommended the following actions: the use of the cluster form of residential development; development regulations appropriate to maintain the Town's rural and small town character; the use of adequate landscaping to screen multi-family projects; implement the Town's AHD zoning provisions; establish annual affordable housing goals; initiate actions to preserve existing affordable housing; address affordable housing for special segments of the Town's population and municipal employees; and encourage the development of housing above retail uses. The 1993 POD also identified options available to the Town to reduce housing costs, improve housing design and increase housing options.



Homesteads Condominiums- "EH-10"
Vacant Pending Resolution of Tax Issues

Progress has been made on achieving several of these goals and recommended actions. The Affordable Housing Development provisions of the zoning regulations were utilized for the development of the Riverside project which contains 49 condominium units, including 13 units of affordable housing. Nunnawauk Meadows has been expanded from 96 units to 120 units, with plans for an additional 24 units. The EH-10 provisions of the Town's zoning regulation have been utilized for the development of Walnut Tree Village, with 132 age restricted condominium units and the Homesteads at Newtown, with 11 condominium units of age restricted housing. In addition, the Homesteads at Newtown has development approvals to construct 160 units of congregate housing and 27 additional condominium units of age restricted housing.

In the past 10 years, Ashlar of Newtown has developed 56 units of assisted living at its Lockwood Lodge facility and the Homesteads at Newtown has developed 100 units of assisted housing. Ashlar of Newtown has also expanded its skilled nursing home facility for the frail elderly to 156 beds. Recently, Newtown granted land use approvals for the Liberty at Newtown project, which will contain 92 units of age restricted condominium housing.

In addition, Newtown has implemented Planning and Zoning provisions that enable the development of housing over commercial uses in Sandy Hook and Hawleyville and has established activities under the State's Small Cities Program to maintain and improve Newtown's existing supply of affordable housing.

A key recommendation which has not been addressed is the creation of provisions with the Town's municipal land use regulations which would result in the protection of meaningful open space.



Sandy Hook Village- Housing over Retail

The following are Issues, Goals and Strategies recommended for consideration in updating the Plan of Conservation and Development:

ISSUE #1: Housing Choices

1. Newtown lacks a meaningful supply of multi-family rental housing for a broad spectrum of ages and incomes. Many who work in Newtown do not have the opportunity to live in the community in which they work. Because of the lack of affordable rental housing, some Newtown residents will not have the opportunity to continue to stay in Town, as their personal circumstances, incomes and housing needs change over time.

Goal: Strive for a more balanced supply of housing types that will accommodate the housing needs of Newtown residents and those working in Newtown.

Strategies:

1. Create municipal regulations that will encourage the creation of multi-family rental housing at densities comparable to those currently allowed for congregate housing, where municipal infrastructure and soil conditions will permit, and include an affordable housing requirement;
2. Encourage the Borough to permit the development of residential uses over ground floor retail businesses, as was recommended in the 1993 POD;
3. If Newtown desires to pursue a goal of developing a more diversified housing stock, consider an integrated planning and community design strategy that reinforces existing built-up mixed-use areas of Town and creates new nodes of mixed-use development along Routes 6 and 25 that incorporate the historical pedestrian friendly development patterns traditional to New England communities.

ISSUE #2: Housing Development, Open Space Preservation, Community Character

1. The development of housing within Newtown directly affects open space and community character issues, as discussed in previous POCD update memorandums. The development of single family detached housing in Newtown consumes open land at the rate of 4.5 acres per dwelling unit.

Goal: Residential development should enhance Newtown's present community character.

Strategies:

1. Create land use regulations that would encourage the use of "conservation" and "open space" subdivision design standards, without affecting the existing permitted density of development. The design of conservation and open space subdivisions should identify and attempt to conserve areas of the site that are most sensitive to the destruction of the lands natural resources and attractive visual qualities;
2. Residential development fronting on rural roads should be sited with a visual buffer from the public realm- the road and right of way.